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# Management Training

for Supervisors and Staff Officers

## Unit 4

### The Job of the Staff Officer

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You cannot teach a man anything;

You can only help him to find it within himself.

Galileo



## UNIT 4

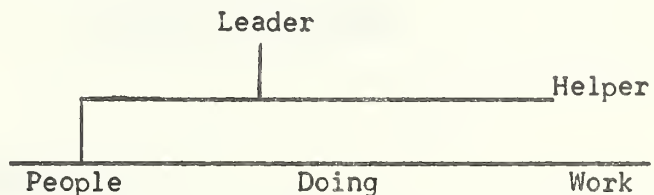
### THE JOB OF THE STAFF OFFICER

#### OBJECTIVES

- (1) To understand the principles of staff operations.
- (2) To understand how line officers use their staff.
- (3) To understand how to use staff assistance from another office.

#### SCS organization

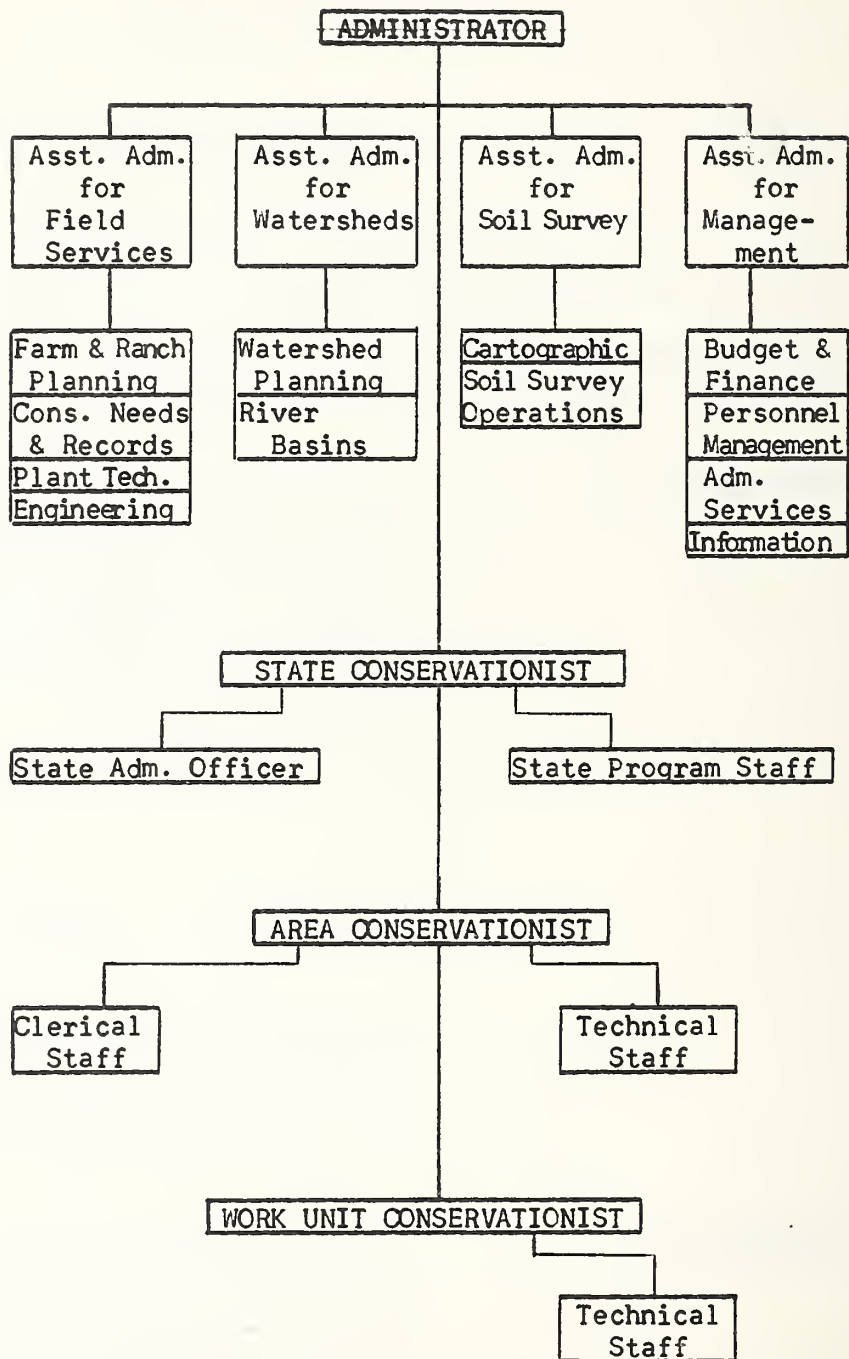
The Soil Conservation Service contains a large number of people, line officers, and staff people of many specialized fields of work, all intent on carrying forward the programs of the Service. This group of people is organized on the basis of what is known as line and staff system, which looks something like this:



In this simple chart, a leader is directing the work of 4 people. He has a man to help him do it. The helper is his staff. This staff assistant does no directing of the 4 people; he only helps the leader to do it. His job is very clear.

#### We have complex organization

But, in the SCS, our line and staff organization is very much more complex. There are upwards of 14,000 people in it,\* spread over the United States and 2 territories. We have an Administrator at the head of it all, and we also have a number of other leaders in charge of activities in different States, parts of States and special offices. All these leaders have assistants of many kinds. The SCS chart of organization, in much simpler form than it really is, looks something like this:





If this organization chart were properly filled in, there would be 50 State and Territorial leaders, some 300 Area leaders and about 3,000 Work Unit leaders. Fully expanded, the chart would contain several thousand people who are in staff positions. An enormous amount of work in the soil conservation field is done by or because of these staff helpers. Each one has very definite things to do; that is to say, a set of duties to perform.

Staff people have one thing in common.

But these staff assistants have one thing in common -- all of them have responsibilities that are quite important, but most of them have no authority to direct any work, unless a leader specifically gives it to them. As a consequence of this apparent anomaly, the way in which staff assistants work becomes very important. There must be some system and order in the way they go about getting their jobs done. Obviously, the better the system, the more productive and efficient the organization can become.

How can staff operations be most effective?

The answers to this question are discussed in this training conference. They have to do with the way staff people can be most effective, and with ways their help can best be used. For convenience, all the material in this discussion is divided into 4 parts:

1. The principles of staff operation (from the viewpoint of the staff assistant himself).
2. How leaders use their staff.
3. How to use staff help (i.e., the receiving end).
4. Some special cases.

#### STAFF OPERATION

Staff job from point of view of staff member

The first section of our discussion deals with the subject from the point of view of the staff members themselves. It assumes that the leader or line officer is really expert in working with his staff. It also assumes that all the people in the Service know how to use staff help when it is made available to them. It may be that

you will disagree with these assumptions, but if you will accept them for a moment, we can consider them again, later.

### Provide special services

As we have already seen, people in staff positions are assistants or helpers. They are in a real sense, specialists, and they provide special services to other people in the organization. They help their leader or line officer by giving him advice, counsel and information he needs to get jobs done. The staff people exert very great influence, and they have a lot to do with our policies and operations. They give no orders except under certain special conditions, and they do not "run the show". Their accomplishments are measured largely by the influence of their ideas. They are in a position to get action by the systematic assembly and forceful presentation of facts that impel their leader to move toward an objective that both they and the leader all understand.

### Staff responsibilities

Staff assistants carry a heavy load of responsibility. For one thing, they must serve their administrator, and serve him well. For another, they must give the right kind of help to hundreds of field men. They have an important relationship to maintain with other staff assistants, especially those who are doing the same type of work they are, but in some other location. They are looked to by the whole organization as authorities in their special fields, and they must be able to justify that confidence.

### Staff headaches

Staff officers have a number of headaches, of course. One is that their administrator doesn't always give the orders that a staff assistant is sure he should. A second one resulting from this, is that the staff officer keeps wishing he could give the obviously necessary orders. A third is that the administrator doesn't always give the same weight to the staff officer's ideas that the staff officer does. Things like these naturally lead to worry or frustrations or in extreme cases even to resignations. They also lead us to a statement of the key principles of staff operations which is:

1. Staff personnel are assistants to an administrator and all the authority they exercise should be exercised in his name.

This idea seems very obvious, but this number one principle is perhaps more often violated or overlooked by staff personnel than any other. Nearly all the other principles of staff operation depend on this one. Unless it is well observed, the others are not much help.

#### Frequently overlooked

The headaches mentioned earlier often result because staff assistants forgot this principle. If you are a staff officer, you know, for example, that you can easily get stomach ulcers trying to make work go that is not sanctioned by your line officer. You can get places only under 2 general conditions: Here they are:

- (a) Your advice or urgent suggestions are given to the administrator, who issues orders to have them carried out.
- (b) Your suggestions are made after the line officer has clearly announced his policy and given orders to have it carried out; everybody understands both the policy and the orders; and your suggestions are in line with the policy.

#### Expected to carry out his Administrator's policies

Even though this first principle may seem to be the most difficult to observe, it is the key to success for a really good staff officer. It carries with it, incidentally, the idea that a staff assistant is expected to carry out his administrator's policies as though they were his own. He may wish to change them, and he should never assume that the policies are fixed for all time, but in the meantime, his duty is clearly to support them.

- 2 Staff members in an organization should be well informed on it's programs, policies, structures, objectives, trends and operating methods.

The point about this principle is that if you don't know your outfit from top to

bottom, you can't function particularly well as a staff advisor. You ought to be thoroughly familiar with your organization's policies. You ought to know well enough so you can chart it instantly, the entire structure of your outfit. You should be able to talk, on demand, about how your agency does its work, who is responsible for what, and who directs whom. If you cannot do these things easily, then you cannot master a staff job.

Be informed on all phases  
of work

There is another, concealed point here. This is the idea that a staff officer who is responsible for one phase of Service work ought to be very familiar with all other phases. You may, for example, be working in Forestry, but you should understand the things that go on in Personnel, Information, or Engineering. The reverse, of course, is also true. The fact is that the job of staff officer is fully effective only as it is performed in proper relation to the jobs of other staff officers. As a staff assistant in any phase, you owe it to yourself and your Service to know the other jobs reasonably well. Incidentally, you don't have to be an expert in every detailed phase of our work to be an expert on Service operation and organization.

Recommendations that fit

Finally, when you really know your Service, you can save a line officer a lot of gray hairs by making recommendations that fit. Avoid making suggestions that violate well-established lines of action, unless you realize what you're doing and are actually urging a policy or organizational change. Your quickest results will come when your advice to administrators is in line with previous decisions; i.e., policy. At this same time, you will do well to bear in mind that a "conformist" must not be just a "yes" man.

3. The authority of ideas is almost as effective as the authority of command provided both are consistent with the same policy and aimed at the same objective.



This is a principle many staff officers have great difficulty in understanding. This is especially true of the staff member who has had no experience as a line officer. When he becomes a line officer he learns, sometimes the hard way, that the best kind of order contains its own impelling reasons for action. In a sense, such an order gives itself; authority need not be flourished. Orders of this kind usually come from the most skillful administrators in the organization.

Good ideas impel, command  
not needed

This is almost always so. There are those few but persistently recurring situations where a direct command must be given. In such cases either facts are lacking or the man who has to be commanded is not, so to speak, in tune with his organization. In such instances, it is necessary and desirable for the administrator to do the ordering. After all, dealing with situations like these is one of the things he is paid for.

Effective ideas

Let it be further noted that the authority of ideas works better when the ideas are clear, well-organized, and convincingly presented. What some staff officers identify as their lack of authority, may, on analysis, turn out to be lack of ideas instead.

4. Objectivity on the part of a staff officer fosters confidence in his recommendations.

Service before personal  
interests

We are familiar with the staff worker who works constantly at getting his phase of the organization's work into the most favored possible position. He never fails to bring out the fact that if his type of work is given top priority, the organization will really go places. He assures us that the real cure for any problem is to hire more men who are trained as he is. In extreme cases he spends a good bit of time figuring out ways and means to enlarge his own staff. We may reluctantly admire this man's nerve and initiative, but we almost always suspect his recommendations. We cannot help but wonder if they are just a few more checker-board moves to advance his

own interests. A staff officer is, of course, expected to look after his phase of the work. But unusual crusading by one staff officer puts him in a sort of competition with other staff people, and even with all the rest of the organization. One must be on one's guard against his blandishments.

### Integral part

Far more valuable to the organization is the staff officer who sees his work as a part, but not the whole, of the program being fostered. He defends his phase of the work as he should, but he also keeps it in an appropriate perspective. He may recommend against it on occasions, whenever he can see an advantage in doing so -- not to him, but to the whole organization. Incidentally, objectivity toward the whole job marks a staff member as one to consult with on matters affecting the whole organization. In this way, he may gain a great advantage in his own phase of the work.

### Impersonal objectivity

Objectivity is difficult to achieve, and it may take a long time to develop. It is too difficult to evaluate facts if you are a crusader, too difficult to draw conclusions uncolored by personal convictions. So it is with a staff advisor, who, unless he maintains an impersonal objectivity, his most "objective" recommendations are seldom given the consideration he hoped for.

5. Facts and ideas marshalled in advance of need are usually more useful than if they are assembled only on demand.

A hunter who aims behind a flying duck will miss just as often as the hunter who aims too far ahead. There is, that is to say, a proper point at which to aim. In working as a staff officer you will be well advised to learn what that point is.

### Anticipate and prepare

You should be able most of the time to anticipate needed action and to prepare for it. Few things make an administrator's day brighter than to find, as he begins to approach a problem, that his staff have also seen it and have already prepared the information he will need in order to solve it. Conversely, it is a dreary matter for your line officer to have to keep ferreting out the information he needs, and continually prodding his staff for help. Incidentally,

close observance of Principle No. 2 -- knowing your organization and what it's doing -- will help you enormously to keep just far enough ahead of your administrator to be most valuable. Being too far ahead of the crowd, of course, doesn't pay many dividends, but you can have vision without being visionary.

Collect facts;  
organize them

There are some other aspects to this. One is that you need to be able to marshal your facts and organize your ideas well. Many staff officers try to drown their administrator with too much stuff. What he wants are well-stated, clear-cut ideas, with really significant facts to back them up -- and with additional material if he really needs it. Conversely he most certainly does not want sketchy information too thin to use for sure decisions.

Present facts and ideas  
convincingly

A second item is that you are expected to be forceful in your presentation of facts and ideas. Your ideas may not always speak for themselves. You owe it to yourself at least, to do your very best job of presenting them. This is one place where salesmanship training may really pay (but be sure you don't substitute salesmanship for ideas and facts).

6. Staff members must keep up to date professionally.

Under this principle, we need to note that a staff member not only has to be good in his field, but he must also stay good! There is no way for him to maintain his technical leadership unless he keeps ahead of everyone else in the organization, in the area where he works. There are 2 means by which he does this:

Self-Improvement

- (a) By working at his own self-improvement. This he does by constant study. He must read a great deal. He must keep up with current literature of his own, as well as of foreign countries. He must read to gain historical perspective. He must write, too, thus testing the value of his ideas on his professional public. After graduation

from college, a professional man either advances in his field, or he stagnates. There is no half-way place. If ever the time comes when a professional staff member lags in his search for new ideas and his striving for broader understanding in his field, disaster is sure to overtake him.

#### Working relationships

- (b) The second way staff members keep up is through the cultivation of working relationships with others in his field. There are 2 types we may consider.

#### Within the SCS

- (1) The first is within the organization, between staff assistants responsible for the same phase of work, but in different locations.

We may illustrate this one by the following example: The staff Engineer in Washington does not direct the work of a State Conservation Engineer. The State Conservationist does that. But the Washington Engineer is expected to provide professional leadership in the Engineering phases of the Service Program. In a professional way, he influences the work of all State Conservation Engineers to a considerable degree. In turn, the Washington Engineer is influenced by the State Conservation Engineer, especially insofar as work in any given State is concerned. A similar professional relationship exists between say, a State Engineer and an Area Engineer in the field. There is, in other words, a considerable degree of influence exerted both ways between staff officers working at the same phase of the Service program. This influence is conditioned by location. The Washington staff officer is expected to take the lead because he is on the national headquarters' staff, and is thus able to get a broader view of the whole program. Insofar as the State is concerned, the State staff officer is expected to take



the lead. Properly nurtured and maintained, close working professional relationships help enormously to achieve coordination in Service activities.

It is possible for these relationships to develop into nearly closed corporations. The Foresters, so to speak, might have no truck with anyone but Foresters. Worse, one staff assistant may undertake actually to direct or supervise the work of other staff assistants. This produces considerable confusion since it violates the principles underlying the staff and line system. It is also true, incidentally, that the necessary relationships can deteriorate so much that staff work in one phase becomes disjointed and far less effective than it should be.

At any rate, professional coordination requires a constant flow of professional information between offices. This is, so to speak, the food for professional thought. It is far more important than is commonly realized. Associated with it is the necessity for periodic meetings of staff officers to consider common problems. State Soil Scientists, for example, need to get together with Washington staff Soil Scientists every so often to exchange ideas about this phase of soil conservation. Without such meetings, professional coordination is likely to become less and less effective. These staff officers thrive on ideas.

#### Outside the SCS

- (2) The second professional relationship is between staff officers and their professional counterparts outside the Service.

This type of relationship is also a two way operation. Professional workers outside the Service need to know and understand the Service's work. By keeping them informed we

are able later to get from them assistance we may badly need.

There must also be a flow of professional information into the Service from workers outside. Necessarily, this can best come through staff officers professionally related to workers in various other organizations and agencies. Most of the time it is ideas that prove of greatest value. This is the important reason why staff officers who must keep "up to snuff" professionally, need to meet personally from time to time with professional workers in their field.

#### HOW LEADERS USE STAFF

##### How leaders work with their staff

The position of a leader, or line officer, in relation to his staff, is primarily that of a supervisor. The things he has to think about, and the principles he needs to observe in dealing with his staff, are fully discussed in The Supervisor's Job. We may list them here briefly for review:

1. Supervisor must know his people as individuals.
2. People must always understand clearly what is expected of them.
3. People must have guidance in doing their work.
4. Good work should always be recognized.
5. Poor work deserves constructive criticism.
6. People should have opportunity to show that they can accept greater responsibility.
7. People should work in a safe and healthful environment.
8. People should be encouraged to improve themselves.

Effective line officers  
good supervisors

Any leader who is able to follow reasonably well these 8 principles of supervision is in a fair way to succeed as a staff director. But he also has some other things to worry about when he is directing a group of people to get work done. Here are some of the more important:

1. Line officers must be careful to assemble as many facts as possible before reaching a decision on any point. Very commonly all the facts are not in the possession of one staff assistant, but in many. Occasionally, it takes considerable time to get all the facts together. Sometimes there may not be enough to use as a decent basis for a decision. At this point an administrator pressed for time may have to gamble. But success in feeling his way should never lead him to believe that he can do it every time.
2. Administrators must weigh facts and ideas and decide promptly upon a course of action most likely to be effective. As they do this, they often make decisions that a single staff assistant may think wrong. This may happen for 2 reasons:
  - (a) The staff assistant does not have as much information as the leader does, even though the staff assistant knows more in his own field than the leader.
  - (b) The line officer does not give as much weight to certain facts as his staff assistant does because their importance may be diminished or overborne by other information. The line officer has to deal with major problems in a way that is at once strategic, shrewd, and reasonably safe. It should be remembered also that he, and not the staff assistant, is fully responsible for the decisions he must make. In any case -- and this is vitally important -- he will find it wise always to explain to his staff why he must make a decision which seems contrary to what they know.

Explain reasons for decision

Consistent  
predictable

3. Line officers need to be reasonably consistent in their decisions. That is, as one decision follows another, they should all exhibit the same general trend and be consistent with broad policies set by higher offices in the Service, the Department, the Government, or by others. A series of unrelated decisions, reversals of decisions, delays in making decisions -- all these can easily destroy the working effectiveness of a staff, as well as other parts of the organization. Consistency, of course, can be a vice as well as a virtue, so that an administrator must tread a fairly narrow path.

Right amount of  
coordination

4. Administrators are in a position to see the workings of all parts of their organization and staff, and they must exercise the right amount of coordination in those activities. This is easy or a hard job, depending in part on the staff assistants. If they keep themselves well informed on all activities, the line officer's job is easy. If they take the non-objective point of view that nothing else is as important as their particular phase of the work, the line officer may have a hard job. (This relates closely to Principle No. 2 of staff operations). In any event, the guidance and direction of all the members of a staff takes planning, careful attention and good humor.

Open-minded

5. Successful line officers are always open-minded. They are not only receptive to new ideas, they are on the lookout for them. They are always willing and interested to listen to their staff's ideas and counsel. They maintain what is popularly known as the "open-door policy." Sometimes what they get is not worth much, but you never can tell. Unless they encourage consultation and get it across to their staff that they are seeking new ideas, they are unlikely to be able to do an outstanding job. Curiously enough, the thinking and the work of an organized group is greater than the sum of its parts.



## Two-way communication

6. Line officers have to watch their communication lines closely. They know that the only successfully functioning staff is the well-informed staff. They recognize that it is a downright necessity for their staff members to understand clearly the reasons underlying policies, decisions, procedures, and various other types of action. Therefore, by conferences, memoranda, and every other useful means, they seek to keep their staff fully informed.

The reverse flow of information -- from staff assistance to line officer -- is likewise exceedingly important. Not all of it can be handled orally, which is one reason why skill in report-writing occasionally becomes critical.

## Orders and policies clearly stated

7. Line officers must take particular care in issuing orders and policies. Both must be crystal clear. Nothing can jam smooth-working organizational machinery as quickly as a mis-stated, poorly stated, or ambiguously stated order or policy. A great deal of time always has to be spent explaining away the misunderstanding generated by the error. Staff assistants can often be very useful here. A preview on their part may result in the elimination of what would otherwise be a serious error.

## Delegations clearly defined and made known

8. Line officers have to delegate clearly defined and specific authority to staff assistants. If they do not do so, the years of their lives are frequently shortened. This subject is treated more fully in The Supervisor's Job. Here let us note that whatever authority is delegated should not only be clear and specific, but also known to the entire portion of the organization affected by it. The delegation needs to be specific since in a "pure" line and staff organization, staff assistants do not have authority.

## DON'TS

There are some pitfalls in this delegation business that a wise line officer avoids. The worst is the situation that sometimes develops in which a staff officer begins directing work of staff officers in other locations without reference to line authority. What it means is that the receiving

staff officer finds himself in the impossible position of serving 2 bosses. Another trouble is one in which a too eager staff assistant exceeds the authority given him or keeps using it after its time limit may have expired. A line officer cannot afford to leave loose ends like these dangling.

Look for potential  
leaders

9. Line officers have to be constantly on the lookout for potential leaders. In addition, they must create opportunities for men who look good to show what they can do. In doing this, the line officers do no more than prepare for the inevitable, since every staff position they have, sooner or later will become vacant.

Show need and  
appreciation

10. Line officers must get over to their staff members in some way the feeling that they are needed and appreciated. They must, that is, use the staff provided for them. Non-use of a staff has the same effect as non-use of an arm -- it atrophies and becomes useless.

HOW TO USE STAFF ASSISTANCE

There are a number of good reasons why people should get a great deal of help from a visiting staff officer, but there are also many reasons why they don't. If you are working in a district, you may feel that the staff personnel doesn't know as much about your situation as you do. In this you are probably right. The staff man, you suspect, may see something you are doing that is wrong. If he reports it, you may get in dutch; therefore, some things had better be kept under cover. You may feel, too, that you have everything under control; why bother with a staff visit you don't need (or want)? In a word, the visiting staff officer is (unless you know him very well) something of an "outlander" which is a sociologist's term for a man who isn't part of your particular group. But to make real use of a staff operator, you will do well to regard him as someone who wants to help you if you will only let him. You can waste his time; you can trap him into incautious statements if you really try; you can fix things so he can't help you at all, if you want to. But in the end it is you who are the loser, not the staff officer.

Always prepare for a  
staff officer's  
visit

To get the most out of staff assistance available to you from other offices of the Service, you will need to observe these simple rules. If you don't do this, you'll lose a lot of valuable time trying to decide what to do after he arrives. Always know well ahead of time when he is coming and whether he has any ideas about what he wants to do. If there are other people on your staff, be sure they'll be on hand, if they need to be. Probably you should exchange some letters with him in the month or so before he arrives. This will help you to get ready for his work with you.

If you have some vexing problems to put to the staff officer, get them organized. Be sure you have all the data he can conceivably need to see your problem in its entirety. Try writing it down. This will help you to crystallize any problem, and it may even help you to solve it yourself. If you need to show him some work in the field, so that he may fully understand, make the necessary arrangements ahead of time. If you fail in these preparations, the staff officer will be entirely justified in pointing out that until you get more data, the problem can't very well be solved, i.e., you get no help.

Plan the work to be  
done while a staff  
officer is with you

As soon as you are clear on your problems, and have everything else ready, make a plan of work. This can be -- and should be -- very simple. It sets out by days what you plan to do, where, and with whom. It is very useful to send this plan to the staff officer before he arrives, in order to get his suggestions. You should be able to get in everything you want, and if you think ahead, you'll be able to come out pretty well.

Notice that you will benefit a great deal if the ideas you get from him, and the general agreements you reach, are put in writing. You can always get a copy of his report, but if you work with him in preparing it, you're both clear on everything. You must set aside some time for this work. A field operator who lets a staff officer get away without getting his ideas and suggestions crystallized and summarized in writing, is losing the best part of the help.

Always try to give a  
visiting staff  
officer a complete  
picture of every-  
thing going on.

This is an important rule to follow for many fairly obvious reasons. The more clearly he sees your situation, the more help he can give you. The more he knows about what you're doing, the more intelligent his suggestions will be. The better he understands, the more surely his recommendations will do you a real service.

There is another less obvious reason why this rule is a good one. This has to do with your attitude and his. If you hold back information, the staff officer will soon begin to suspect it. He will begin to doubt your good faith. In turn he will naturally make very cautious recommendations, short of what they might otherwise have been. You will find yourselves engaged in a fencing match or fumbling about in the dark. Worse yet, he will remember that you kept a card up your sleeve. It will take many visits to erase this belief. In the meantime, you, who need the help, won't get what you need, not for a long, long time.

Never waste the time  
of a staff officer

We could state this rule equally well in more general terms: Never waste time. The time you spend with a staff officer belongs to both of you and it's limited. The more you waste, the less help you get.

This idea is associated with preparing and planning for a staff office visit. If you have failed to gather data so that you can get an opinion quickly, you will waste time if both of you have to get it. If you trot him about to see "interesting" things, just for his delectation, what do you get out of it? If you have him come to help you at a time of year when your problem can't be clearly seen on the land, nobody suffers but yourself.

Make a point of inviting  
a staff officer's  
criticism of your  
work

This rule usually causes raised eyebrows. It sounds as though -- in fact it is, inspection. What we're saying here is: Ask for it?

The idea is pretty simple. You're doing a lot of work. You want it to be really good work, not only so that you can be proud of it, but also because good workers frequently get promoted. Nothing delights a staff officer more than to see outstanding jobs. And any staff man worth his salt will commend you for it,



both while you are together and in his report to higher line officers.

On the other hand, suppose this staff officer turned inspector, finds out you've made some mistakes, or that some of your work doesn't measure up, despite the fact that such a situation appears dangerous, you are the man who stands to profit when this happens. There is nothing shameful about making a mistake. Human beings make them all the time. But the man who makes progress is the man who is interested in recognizing his own errors so that he can do better in the future. None of us are infallible and few of us can detect all our errors. We need help here, and a wise operator gets this kind of help every chance he can.

Make plans to take  
action as a result  
of staff suggestions;  
then take it.

You may know, or at least you should, that a staff officer is usually in no position to order you to do something. If you want to stand on this technical point, then again, you are the loser. Usually the staff officer knows better than you do what line of action needs to be followed. It's his job to be well informed on this. Sooner or later, you will find that his advice was sound. You are likely to get places faster by following his suggestions right away.

Treat staff officers  
like human beings,  
more, no less.

This rule sounds ridiculous, fortunately, to most people, but there are the inevitable apple-polishers who bow low before representative of a "higher level." There are also the sullen workers who accord their staff officer scant courtesy and little attention. Both kinds of operators are unlikely to succeed particularly well. Staff officers are people who have some special knowledge they're willing to give you. They seek no favors; they do appreciate working as your associate. You will be well advised to try it that way.

### SUMMARY

We have considered some principles of staff operation from the viewpoint of the staff assistant himself. We have explored some of the ways that leaders use their staff. We have learned how to plan for effective use of staff visits.

Let us now examine some actual situations and see how administrators and staff people handled them. Since people are the most important

factor in any situation, we shall try to develop our skill in analyzing some cases that administrators and staff people are meeting every day. We shall especially emphasize the human, personal side, of each situation since that generally is one of the important considerations in making the proper decision.

#### CASE A

The ASC County Committee furnished the Blank SCS Work Unit a 247 for stock pond on John Doe's farm. The WUC met the farmer and a contractor at the site to determine need and feasibility. At that time, May 24, 1957, the WUC determined that a pond was needed and expressed belief that the site would be satisfactory although it would have some hazards as far as a spillway was concerned. The WUC told the contractor to go ahead and clear the site preparatory to construction of the pond. The farmer wanted a dam height of 20 to 22 feet. Upon checking his authority when he returned to the office, the WUC found that the desired height exceeded his authority. The WUC then contacted the GS-7 engineer and discussed the plans for the proposed pond. June 23, 1957, they went to the farm and looked over the site. The site had been cleared by the contractor. The engineer questioned the adequacy of the spillway area and the "tie-in" material and disapproved the pond site. A more favorable site location, about 300 feet above the original site, was located. On June 25, 1957, the WUC asked that he be furnished reasons in writing for disapproving the pond.

The contractor, on June 20, 1957, wrote to the State SCS office complaining about the handling of this pond request. He stated that the WUC told him the site was all right and he would go along with him on it, but he wanted the contractor to move a machine in there and clear away the brush and the farmer moved a fence that was in the way. Since approval was not given, the contractor would get no pay for the clearing done. The contractor further pointed out that he didn't think the location was ideal, but it had its advantages over the site the SCS wanted to change to.

This WUC had a problem, didn't he?

Analyze the case

1. What was the objective or objectives in this case?

List objectives on  
blackboard

2. How well was the situation handled?

List possible actions  
on board

1. What are the possible actions that could have been taken?
2. What effect would each action have on the objective?

Discuss application  
principles super-  
vision and staff  
operations

1. Which ones were applied?
2. Would the application of any others prevented or helped solve the problem?
3. What other guidance have you obtained from this training conference that would have helped prevent or solve this problem?

Follow similar procedure  
in presenting and  
analyzing several  
other cases.

Encourage members to  
present cases they  
have experienced  
or observed.

CASE B - The Boss Won't Listen\*

Your boss is a busy man. He is one of those people who always seems to be in high gear. Often times, when you have a chance to talk with him about a problem, he gives the impression that he wishes you would hurry. He pretends to listen but you are not sure that you have his attention. Actually, what you have to say is important to him and the action you take as a result of your discussion is important to both of you. This is not just an occasional situation, but seems to be the pattern of your contacts.

\*Air Force Pamphlet 50-2-2

CASE C - Staff Specialist Overlooks Going  
Through Line Officer

Joe Gaines, GS-11 Management Agronomist, serving the eastern part of the state wrote to Bill Brown, GS-9 Agronomist, and told him that he would be giving some training in an adjoining area next month. He asked Bill to meet him in the other area and assist with training work unit personnel. Bill was interested in the phase of training to be given and it happened that he had first-hand experience and could make a worth-while contribution. He showed the memorandum to his Area Conservationist and asked if he should plan to assist Joe with the training. The AC with some heat said "No, I have approved your schedule for next month and Joe is not changing it."

CASE D - Relationship Problem Between An  
Engineering Specialist and WUC

The engineering specialist serving 3 work units was present for the weekly staff planning meeting at the Podunk work unit. The WUC in the course of the meeting asked the engineer to check a drainage job that had been planned and designed by the work unit engineering aid and the engineering specialist. The WUC remarked that J. W. Bronson, a prominent farmer and cooperator with the SCD, was not satisfied with the plan that was developed and had complained to him.

When the situation was mentioned, the engineer and the aid both flared up, the meeting became very tense and showed every indication of developing into a serious break. In relating the situation, the WUC said that the engineer was a very capable one and he did not want to do anything that would hurt him or destroy their previous good working relationship. The reaction was totally unexpected and he was unprepared to cope with it. The engineer and aid were apparently considering the WUC's statement as a personal criticism and a failure on his part as a line officer to support his staff.



